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seldom allows them to reach maturity. Besides the drought, birds, ants, locusts, and rats often destroy the crops. The same fruits and cereals are cultivated by the Mataco and the Tobas in Bolivia, maize and manioc however with greater success than among the Choroti, since the climate there is more favourable. On the whole, the Chaco tribes are greatly dependent for their subsistence on the crops nature spontaneously gives them, and the great rôle that wild fruits like the algaroba, the chañar, the tusca, and a few others play in the economic life of these Indians has already been mentioned. It is mainly owing to these useful trees that the interior parts of the Chaco are habitable for people living in a state of nature.

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The Bolivian Tobas, although they cultivate maize on a small scale, still get their main supply of this important cereal from the Avas in the north, with whom they carry on a sort of trade. Generally they get the maize in exchange for dried fish, which they store in considerable quantities during the summer season.

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Fishing is the main occupation of the tribes living on the River Pilcomayo, and these Indians are therefore never seriously threatened by starvation. During the rainy season, when the river is swollen, fishing is often impossible; the proper season begins in April or May when the water is low and fish appear in abundance along the banks of the river. All Pilcomayo tribes use nets made of *caraguatá* fibres and of a peculiar triangular form, and since they have no canoes or vessels of any kind they always catch the fish by swimming and diving, in which they display remarkable skill. The Tobas, who are particularly skilled fishermen, use not only nets, but also, and I believe more commonly, bow and arrows, a method only occasionally practised by the Choroti and the Mataco. When the Indians have caught a fish they instantly kill it with a small club of palo santo if it is a large one, if it is of a smaller kind simply by biting the head.

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During a big fishing expedition the Indians, at any rate the Tobas, sometimes catch fish in enormous quantities. They preserve them by roasting, then store them in special shelters, formed of a roof made of reeds and palm-leaves resting on four poles. This dried fish forms an important article of exchange among the Tobas.

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Next to fishing, hunting is the most important means of subsistence of the Chaco Indians, but in this respect also the Choroti and Mataco are inferior to the Tobas. Especially the Choroti seemed to me to be poor hunters. In the parts of the Chaco inhabited by these Indians game is scarce, and with their comparatively small bows and arrows they only

000 ance. The older Indians still knew that the object of the dance at which this dress was worn was to conjure the spirits of the dead, the *añas*, who were believed to come in great numbers to the annual drinking-feasts with the intention of taking part in these joyful entertainments. But the ostrich dress was not the only thing worn on these occasions. Masks were also worn and rattles of hard shells were tied round the legs. The masks and the rattles, together with the ostrich dress and the *yandúa*, formed a real magical apparatus intended to drive off and conjure the unwelcome guests. We know that masks are especially worn by the Indians at death-feasts and that they are, or at least originally have been, purely magical things comparable to drums, rattles, etc., with which supernatural beings are influenced. Even in our days the *Avas* and *Chané* use masks at the carnival of the whites in connection with the dance performed on that occasion. They are rudely carved out of a soft kind of wood into the likeness of a human face and are afterwards, according to a common Indian custom, thrown away or destroyed. The mask, which has been tabooed or infected because of its contact with the dangerous spirits, can no longer be used.

The participation of the half-civilised Indians, with their native religious ceremonies, in the carnival of the whites, is an interesting phenomenon. It shows us the amalgamation of a Christian and a purely heathen festival, an amalgamation which of course is psychologically possible only under the assumption that there is an intrinsic connection between them.

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535 As to the magical dances of the Chaco Indians, I may mention that the Mataco and the Choroti have a dance, the particular object of which is to secure good luck in fishing. The Mataco call this ceremonial dance *Vúokoi*, the Choroti again *Siyúhs*. *Siyúhs* is the name of the kind of fish called *bocachico* in Spanish, the most common fish in the Pilcomayo river. Fishing is the main livelihood of the tribes who have settled on the banks of the river, and the fishing season proper begins at the end of May or the beginning of June, when the dry season in the strict sense begins and the water in the river is low. I have not seen this dance performed, I have only been told about it by the Indians. It is a sort of ring-dance, the Indians making movements in quick time round a live fish placed on the ground, while an Indian standing outside the circle tries to catch the fish. Immediately after the dance is finished the Indians run down to the river, and, thanks to the dance, will have good luck. The dance is believed to have the power of making the fish

assemble in great quantities in a limited area, so that the fishing men will be able to catch them easily with their nets.

In this magical dance we easily recognize the same principle as for instance in the Choroti dance *Arúshe*, when the young men try to hurry on the girls by dancing and chanting around them. In the dance *Siyúhs*, the live fish, which is the direct object of the ceremony, evidently represents the rest of the fish in the river, which consequently, according to the principles of homoeopathic magic, is favourably influenced.

A few general words may be added as to dancing and chanting as magical rites. The Chaco Indians ascribe great efficacy to the singing or chanting which accompanies nearly all their magical and religious ceremonies. We have also seen that in this kind of conjuration as a rule no words are uttered; the power lies in the voice itself, being an emanation of the general magical power which, according to Indian belief, is inherent in the human body itself. It is exactly the same with the rhythmical movements of the body carried out in dancing, by which a part of the energy latent in the organism, so to speak, is released into actuality. Combined with the chanting and with the powerful sounds of drums and rattles, they are believed to act irresistibly upon supernatural beings.

But there is one more idea connected with dancing. One of the leading principles in the Indian conjurations is the principle of *imitation*. By imitating a person or a supernatural being in his movements, voice, or external appearance the magician believes that he can get hold of his soul or essence and thus be able to control him completely. Now, as a matter of fact, the Chaco Indians believe that *the evil spirits themselves dance* when at night they approach the villages in order to visit their inhabitants with sickness and misfortune. This idea is rightly expressed by Pelleschi with special reference to the Argentine Mataco, when he says of the *ahút* among other things: 'These spirits . . . fly with the wind, following it and producing the same sounds as the storm; they dance in a ring round the *tolderias* (villages) or round the *toldos* (huts) of the persons whom they want to harm'.<sup>1)</sup> This statement applies to all Chaco Indian beliefs. Since the natives fancy that dancing is the favourite way in which the spirits move, it is in accordance with their magical ideas that they should try to keep them back and counteract their evil influences by performing the same sort of movements, and in general by imitating their manners as faithfully as possible.

<sup>1)</sup> Pelleschi, *Los indios Matacos y su lengua*, p. 94.